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THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING BOUNDARIES

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Malorie Mackey is an actress, host, and writer living in Los Angeles, CA. Malorie's first book was published in 2017 and her short story "What Love Has Taught Me" has been published in the anthology "Choices." You can find Malorie's travel content on dozens of digital media platforms. Check out www.maloriesadventures.com for more. Malorie's adventures don't just encompass physical adventures. She has been a student of intuition since she was a teenager, studying at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. In 2019, Malorie discovered the Monroe Institute while filming her travel show. Since then, she has been studying the art and science of consciousness through many different programs and life experiences.

The more I write about wellness and lifestyle topics, the more I notice trends everywhere. And recently, most of the people I've been speaking with have been struggling with the idea of setting boundaries in their lives. I, too, am challenged by this. Even though it can be hard to do, it's an important practice that benefits your overall wellbeing. Setting boundaries is the first step in recognizing what makes you happy and healthy and helps set parameters for achieving it.

As a younger (and extremely ambitious) woman, I did everything I could to be available for work at all times. I felt if I ever said no for any reason, it would close a metaphorical door, and I made it my policy not to close any doors. So, I allowed my bosses to text me ridiculous requests late at night. And rather than setting boundaries by giving them my hours of availability and shutting off my phone at night, I would respond and work all hours. Time and time again, I filled in the gaps for others when they were falling short, rather than holding them accountable. The more I did this, the more I would expect to be acknowledged and rewarded for it. But in reality, I was training people to take advantage rather than appreciate my extra time and effort. In other words, it became expected of me, and constantly trying to live up to it isn't healthy. In my personal life, too, I had trouble saying no to friends. Even if running on fumes I'd push myself to join their activities so I could be considered a "good friend."

The older I got, the more I began to value my time and prioritize myself, both in my work and at home. The more I felt comfortable advocating for myself, the more I realized the importance of setting boundaries. Turning off my computer at 5:30 p.m. was liberating! Rather than writing extra articles and putting in extra time for my day job, I began using that time for my own website or other outlets that provided me with creative freedom and excitement. Suddenly, I was growing my own brand in the time I used to spend working extra for others. I stopped being available on the weekends and instead turned Saturday into a *productive* "me" day and Sunday into a *relaxing* "me" day. I can honestly say, this has really improved the quality of my life.

So, take a lesson from me. If you always find yourself working extra hours, filling in where others are falling short, or feeling as if you are being taken advantage of, perhaps it's time to set boundaries for yourself. To do this, simply notate the times you are supposed to be working in the week (that you are paid for), and ensure you are only available during those times to respond to work requests. If you find people reaching out beyond those times, set the precedence that you are not available then by not answering your phone. You can follow up the next day at work by simply saying, "Sorry, I was done with work for the day yesterday, but I'm here now for you."

Another way to enforce your boundaries is to stop doing extra work just because others won't. Filling in where others fall short every once in a while, in specific circumstances, can be a lovely, kind gesture. But constantly doing it for the same people over and over is unhealthy and it shows them they can take advantage of you. It's something I've always done, but recently, with my time constraints, I've had to make it clear to colleagues exactly what I will be doing. If they are unable to follow through with their part, I let them know that unfortunately I only have time to do my share.

While I'm not by any means endorsing rudeness toward others, it is healthy to set boundaries in life so you can be happier and healthier overall. There's nothing wrong with nicely letting people know when you are and aren't available. Sometimes, we need to take more personal time for ourselves, and one of the best ways to do this is by setting boundaries, turning off the phone, and allowing yourself to meditate or just enjoy some "you" time while no one else is around. Focusing on yourself is healthy, and one of the best ways to do so in this busy world is to set boundaries. It's something I'm learning now, and my life has been much better because of it.